

REMARKS

The above amendments to the above-captioned application along with the following remarks are being submitted as a full and complete response to the Office Action dated January 25, 2006. In view of the above amendments and the following remarks, the Examiner is respectfully requested to give due reconsideration to this application, to indicate the allowability of the claims, and to pass this case to issue.

Status of the Claims

As outlined above, claim 6 stands for consideration in this application, wherein claims 7 and 11-28 are being canceled without prejudice or disclaimer, while claim 6 is being amended to correct formal errors and to more particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject invention. Claims 22-28 were previously withdrawn from consideration in this application; claims 1-5 and 8-10 remain canceled.

The amendments to claim 6 are fully supported in the specification, including but not limited to Figures 4 and 5; page 14, line 17 to page 15, line 19; and page 17, line 9 to page 20, line 17. Applicant hereby submits that no new matter is being introduced into the application through the submission of this response.

Prior Art Rejections

The Examiner rejected claims 6-7 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over US Patent No. 5,774,668 to Choquier et al. in view of US Patent No. 6,857,025 to Maruyama et al. Further, the Examiner rejected claims 11-21 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Choquier '668 in view of US Patent No. 6,707,812 to Bowman-Amuah. Applicants have reviewed the above rejections, and hereby respectfully traverse.

The present invention as now recited in claim 6 is directed to a method of allocating computer resources to each of a plurality of users connected to a computer system via an external network, the computer system including a plurality of computers interconnected via an internal network for processing process request packets sent from each user. The method comprises the steps of: for a use contract between each user and the computer system, urging each user to input a first virtual IP address to be used as an access destination address of process request packets, and to determine which of the first virtual IP address and a second virtual IP address, that is included in each of the process request packets sent from the user as an access source IP address, is to be used for identifying the user when a process request

packet is sent to the computer system from the user; registering in the computer system mapping information for determining a user identification from a determined one of the first virtual IP address and second virtual IP address when a process request packet is sent to the computer system from the user; urging each user to input a service level condition as a portion of the use contract, the service level condition including at least upper or lower limits of the number of computers to be allocated to the user; determining an allocation of the computers to each user in accordance with the service level condition input by each user, and forming an allocation definition table including the user identification of each user and correspondence information between the first virtual IP address to be used as access destination address in process request packets from each user and real IP address of computers allocated to each user; and distributing each of the process request packets from each user to a computer allocated to the corresponding user by referring to the allocation definition table.

Among the features of the present invention, using as an example the embodiment illustrated in Figures 4 and 5, the present invention embodies the distinguishable method features of (1) urging, by the computer system, a user to input a first virtual IP address to be used as a destination address of process request packets and to determine which one of the first virtual IP address and a source virtual IP address (a second virtual IP address) that is included in each of the process request packets is to be used for identifying the user; (2) registering, in the computer system, mapping information (T19) for figuring out a user identification (e.g., #0, #1) from determined one of the first and second virtual IP addresses; and (3) determining, by the computer system, allocation of computers to the user in accordance with the service level condition input by the user, and forming an allocation definition table (T30-T32) showing relationships of the user identification and correspondence information between the real IP address (e.g., a10, a11, b10, b11) of the computers thus allocated to the user and the first virtual IP address (e.g., a100, b100).

At the operation stage, in the present invention, when receiving a process request packet from a user, the computer system identifies the user by the mapping information, referring to the allocation definition table by using the user ID of the identified user as a key, and obtains the real IP address of a computer allocated to the user, thereby distributing the received process request packet to the allocated computer. With this arrangement, it is possible to broaden options for selecting a user identification method and hence provide a user friendly system.

Applicants will note that, if the computers are classified functionally such as Web servers, AP servers, DB servers, etc., the first virtual IP address as the destination address of a process request packet sent from a user differs for each of the functions (e.g., a100, b100 in Fig. 5). In such a case, both the identified user ID and the first virtual IP address designated in the received packet are used as a key to obtain a real IP address to be distributed.

In contrast to the present invention, Choquier '668 fails to disclose or suggest, among other features, the steps of urging a user to input a first virtual IP address and of forming the allocation definition table to be used for actual distribution of the process request packet, as set forth above. Rather, Choquier '668 discloses a system for on-line service in which the processing loads of servers executing service application are balanced dynamically. For such load balancing, Choquier '668 merely discloses specifically adding a server from a pool of unused servers to the servers pertaining to a service group executing the same service, and transferring the heavy loaded server to another server without terminating a user service session (see col. 7, lines 33-41). As a result, Choquier '668 by itself cannot anticipate each and every feature of the present invention as recited in claim 6.

The secondary reference of Maruyama '025 merely discloses a system and method for supporting service level agreements, and fails to disclose or suggest any preparation procedures for distributing actual process request packets according to allocated computers, and a scheme of distribution of the process request packets. Thus, Maruyama '025 cannot make up for the deficiencies in Choquier '668, such that their combination could render each and every feature of the present invention as recited in claim 6 obvious to one of skill in the art.

Applicants will respectfully submit that the present invention as claimed is distinguishable and thereby allowable over the prior art of record.

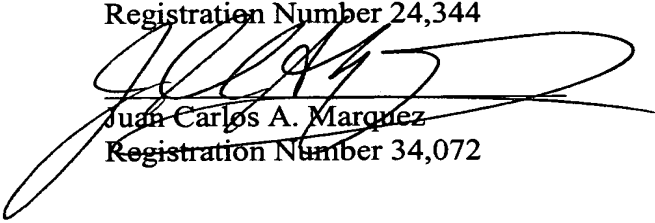
Conclusion

In view of all the above, Applicant respectfully submits that certain clear and distinct differences as discussed exist between the present invention as now claimed and the prior art references upon which the rejections in the Office Action rely. These differences are more than sufficient that the present invention as now claimed would not have been anticipated nor rendered obvious given the prior art. Rather, the present invention as a whole is distinguishable, and thereby allowable over the prior art.

Favorable reconsideration of this application as amended is respectfully solicited. Should there be any outstanding issues requiring discussion that would further the prosecution and allowance of the above-captioned application, the Examiner is invited to contact the Applicant's undersigned representative at the address and phone number indicated below.

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